

468 South Perry Street Montgomery, Alabama 36130-0900 334-242-3184 / Fax: 334-240-3477 Lisa D. Jones Executive Director State Historic Preservation Officer

April 11, 2018

City of Alabaster Karen Fillingim 1953 Municipal Way Alabaster, AL 35007

RE: Buck Creek Water Tower & Jail, 1953 Municipal Way, Shelby County, Alabama

Listed Date: March 29, 2018

Dear Ms. Fillingim:

It is my pleasure to present to you the certificate for the above referenced property in honor of its listing in the Alabama Register of Landmarks & Heritage.

Thank you for your dedication to preserving Alabama's historic resources.

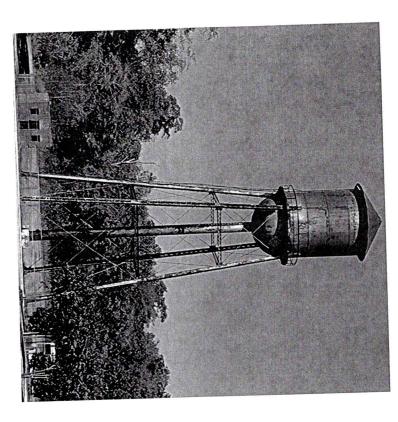
Best Regards,

Harrah Hormon

Hannah Garmon Coordinator, Alabama Register of Landmarks & Heritage (334)230-2644 Hannah.Garmon@ahc.alabama.gov

Enclosure

# ALABAMA REGISTER OF LANDMARKS AND HERITAGE



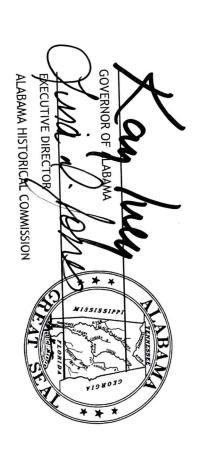
THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT

BUCK CREEK JAIL & WATER TOWER

LOCATED IN SHELBY COUNTY WAS LISTED ON

MARCH 29, 2018





# DETERMINATION OF ELIGIBILITY CHECKLIST ALABAMA HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Building name: Buck Creek Jail + Water Tower
Street address:
Type of Application: HRTC AR Section 106 NR Ad Valorem
For HRTC and Section 106:
Individually listed in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP)
Located in existing National Register (NR) historic district Contributing resource Non-contributing resource
Individually eligible
Contributing resource in potential NR historic district
Not eligible for NRHP
Criteria for Evaluation:
B Persons C Architecture D Archaeology
Aspects of Integrity:
DesignFeeling
MaterialsIntact strata
Application:
Sufficient physical description  Sufficient description of past use/land disturbance
Sufficient argument for meeting NRHP/ARLH criteria
Decision:
Additional information is required to make a determination:
This property is eligible for the NRHP/ARLH:
This property is not eligible for the NRHP/ARLH because:

# ALABAMA REGISTER REVIEW BOARD MEETING

March 29, 2018 10:00 am

#### **AGENDA**

#### **CALL TO ORDER**

#### **NOMINATIONS**

#### Oxford Historic District

Oxford, Calhoun County POS 1875-1978 Criteria A: Commerce Criteria C: Architecture 19 contributing; 7 non-contributing

#### Alpine Baptist Church

Alpine, Talladega County 1871 Criteria A: Religion Criteria C: Architecture 3 contributing; 0 non-contributing

#### Camp Fletcher

McCalla, Jefferson County 1926 Criteria A: Ethnic Heritage Criteria B: Pauline Fletcher Criteria C: Architecture 9 contributing; 9 non-contributing

#### Fort McDermott

Spanish Fort, Baldwin County 1864 Criteria A: Military History Criteria D: Archeology I contributing; 0 non-contributing

#### Elba Theatre

Elba, Coffee County 1933; 1946; & 1953 Criteria A: Social History; Theater I contributing; 0 non-contributing

#### Reeves Grove Baptist Church & Cemetery

Steele, St. Clair County 1872 Criteria A: Religion; Funerary Art Criteria C: Architecture 2 contributing; 0 non-contributing

#### **Hardy Homeplace**

West Greene, Greene County 1886 Criteria A: Agriculture Criteria C: Architecture 3 contributing; 0 non-contributing

# AHC Staff Alabama Register Checklist

Date Received:	2017		
Building name: Buck	Creek mill wa!	ter Tower & Jo	2.]
Street address:			
County:			
Application Contains:  Property information Floor plan & Site pla Physical description History Bibliography and geo Photographs	n		
Category:   Building	ng District	Structure	Object
Date of Construction:  Alteration Date:		Jail 1916	
Significance:	_B	⊠c	□D
AREAS OF SIGNIFIC	ANCE:	•	
archeology-prehistoric	community planning	humanitarian	politics/government
archeology-historic	conservation	<b>⊠</b> industry	religion
agriculture	education	landscape architecture	scientific
Varchitecture	engineering	□law	sculpture
Tart	ethnic heritage	literature	social history
Commerce	exploration	military	theater
communications	funerary art	music	other:
( need word fro	ouice - o	day was it built, terior pictures his pictures)	, how was it used
AHC Reviewer:	wh Holmon	Date:	09-14-17

#### Dear Hannah Garmon,

Thank you for the opportunity to supplement the information for our nomination of the Buck Creek Mill's Water Tower and Jail to the Alabama Register of Landmarks and Heritage. I have attempted to answer the required additional information, outlined below, to the best of my ability.

- 1. What did a typical day at the Mill would look like?
- 2. What was life like for people working there?
- 3. When was the water tower placed into service?
- 4. Explain further 1896 on form, but mill started in 1904?
- 5. Was water tower used previously, if so, what for?
- 6. What alterations were made to the water tower in 1906 and 1911?
- 7. What years was the jail used?
- 8. Was it only for people living and working in the mill village?
- 9. Please submit current interior and exterior pics of water tower and jail.

Hopefully, the following meets expectations. If not, please let me know. I am happy to try again.

All the best,

Karen Fillingim



468 South Perry Street Montgomery, Alabama 36130-0900 334-242-3184 / Fax: 334-240-3477 Lisa D. Jones
Executive Director
State Historic Preservation Officer

September 14, 2017

Ms. Karen Fillinglin 1953 Municipal Way Alabaster, AL 35007

Dear Ms. Fillinglin,

Thank you for your interest in nominating the Buck Creek Mill's Water Tower and Jail, in Alabaster, Shelby County to the Alabama Register of Landmarks & Heritage. After initial review of the nomination, we require some additional information, as outlined below:

#### Section 5. Floor & Site Plan

We require a floor plan of the jail and a current site plan.

#### Section 7. Significance

We appreciate the great detail you have already provided for the water tower and jail's significance. I would just like to know if you can provide information about what a typical day at the Mill would have been like? What was life like for the people working and living there? When was the water tower placed into service? It says 1896 on the form, but the mill was not started until 1904. Was the water tower used previously, and if so, what for? What alterations were made to the water tower in 1906 and 1911? What years was the jail used? What crimes needed to be committed to be placed in the jail? Was it only for the people living and working in the mill village? These are a few questions that I have regarding the history of the site. You included Bobby Joe Seales article about the Mill, but it only briefly talked about the jail, could you please provide more details about the history of the water tower and jail?

#### Section 11. Photographs

Please submit current interior and exterior pictures of both the jail and water tower on a CD/DVD, external drive, or printed copies to our office.

We look forward to receiving your information. The deadline for submission for the November 2017 meeting is October 26, 2017 If you have any questions about the Alabama Register, please feel free to contact me at 334.230.2644 or Hannah.Garmon@ahc.alabama.gov.

With warm regards,

Hannah Harmon

Hannah Garmon

Coordinator, Alabama Register of Landmarks & Heritage



# ALABAMA REGISTER OF LANDMARKS & HERITAGE NOMINATION FORM

Historic Name: Buck Creek Cotton Mill — Jail  And/or Common Name: Habaster City Hall	
Preferred name for Certificate: Historic Name or Common Name	
City: Habser Shallow	
State: Alabama County: Shelby Zip: 35007  sthe property located within the city limits? Yes No Latitude: 33.2442813 Longitude: 86.8163723  Township: 215 Range: 03W Section: 2 USGS Quad Map:	
B. CLASSIFICATION	
Category:  Dwnership:  Public  Private  Both  Cateus:  Occupied  Vnoccupied  Work in progress  Accessible:  No  VYes; restricted  Yes: unrestricted	
1. OWNER OF PROPERTY	
Address: 1953 MUNICIPAL WAY  City: 4446800 State: 44 Zip: 35007	
Email: KFILINGIME CITY HALABASTER. COM	

#### 5. FLOOR PLAN & SITE PLAN

Attach sketched floor plan. If the property includes more than one building, submit a site plan showing the locations, dates of construction, and uses of the buildings.

6. PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION See Instructions for more information. Source: Construction date: Source: Alteration date: Early 1900's - no record Contractor: 10 reco Architect/Builder: Remaining historic fabric: Physical condition: (High, Medium, Low) (Excellent, Good, Fair, Poor, Ruinous) No. of stories: Historic use of property: Current use of property: other Architectural style sub-category: Architectural style category: Basic shape: Sauare Basic typology: Historic Construction material(s): Bick, concret Basic floor plan: Roof finish material(s): Current exterior wall concrete material(s): Pource concrete Foundation material: Main roof configuration: Porch type: open, fixed, metal Window type and materials: Describe alterations: Number and type of all outbuildings on the property: Buck Oreck Otton Mill Water Tower (if significant, fill out separate survey form) Basic Plat Roof Brick Building. The front facade has a single entrance and 2 fixed open windows "Imetal bars.

The exterior has 2 small fixed, open windows with metal bars. (if significant, fill out separate survey form) Exterior Architectural Description: The pil sits beside the 100+ year-old water tower, enclosed behind a chain link sence, and behind the parking with of the municipal government behind the parking wildings.

#### 7. SIGNIFICANCE

Criteria (check all that apply and explain below). See Instructions for more information.

Criterion A: Associated with community, state, or nation.	th historical events and ac	tivities relating to the property	that are important to the history of the
Criterion B: Person or grounation.	p with whom the propert	ty is associated is important to t	the history of the community, state, or
Criterion C: Type, period, of the community, state, or nation		represents architectural featur	res that are significant in the development
(archaeological component).			Alabama's history or prehistory
AREAS OF SIGNIFICAT			
archeology-prehistoric	community planning		religion
archeology-historic	conservation	landscape architecture	scientific
agriculture	education	law	sculpture
architecture	engineering	literature	social history
art	exploration/settlem	ent military	theater
Commerce	funerary art	music	other:
communications	humanitarian	politics/government	,

#### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

For each area of significance checked above, explain why this property is important. Use additional sheets as necessary.

\* Attached sheet

8. BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REF	ERENCES	
Use attached sheets as necessary	of Rush Made	Mah. MIM
Use attached sheets as necessary  1936 Appraisal &	mey of puck week	allon IMII.
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: *		
9. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA Acreage of nominated property:	M saurre feet o	tenclosed area
Acreage of nonlinated property.	W 4/1-20-0 1-201	
Attach a map showing the location of	f the property.	s.
IO Daman Applying for Hist	enic Pogistor Dosignatic	an an
Name: Applying for Hist	IM	)
Address: 1953 Municipal	way	2002
City: Habbler	State:	Zip: <b>350</b> /
Telephone:	tyotalabaster.com	1
Email: KHIIINGIM EU	i y or wowasta . com	
II. PHOTOGRAPHS:		
Images are essential to the review proce		
tiving the continue to the con	d Cood quality 1" x 6" photos w	ill he acconted but do NOT stanle

Images are essential to the review process. Submit current, good quality digital images on a CD/DVD. Interior and exterior photos are required. Good quality 4" x 6" photos will be accepted, but do NOT staple or tape photographs. All images will become the property of the AHC and will not be returned.

#### 12. REMINDER:

Along with this completed application, include attachments for Items 5, 9 and 11 and send them to:

Alabama Historical Commission
Attn: Hannah Garmon
468 S. Perry Street
Montgomery, Alabama 36130-0900
334.230.2644
Hannah.Garmon@ahc.alabama.gov

#### Statement of Significance

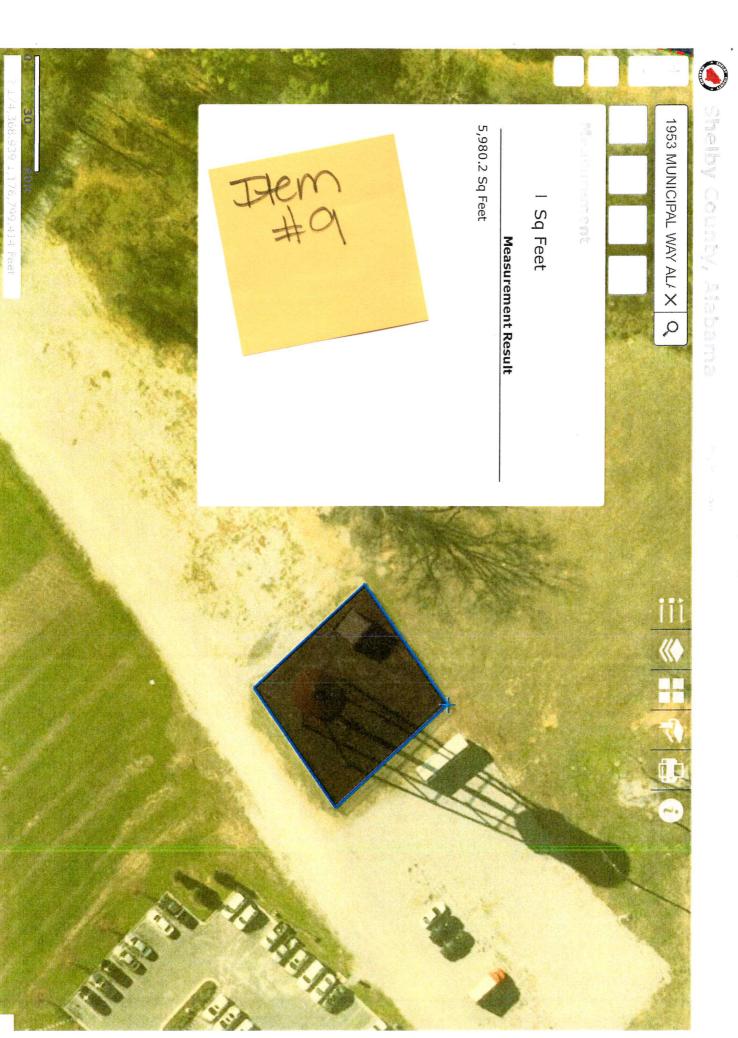
The State of Alabama's history is proudly rooted in industrial development. The water tower and jail are the last two remaining remnants from a bygone era marking the rich history of the Siluria Mill Village, the self-contained community which laid the groundwork for the Alabaster we know and love today. The City of Alabaster considers both to be a symbolic reminder of where we've come from as a city. Currently, they lack the look of honor and distinction they deserve. We would like to change that. Marking our historical relics go hand and hand with the AL200 Bi-Centennial Celebration. The overall intention of our bi-centennial project is to enhance the unique characteristics standing at the heart of our community while offering a pedestrian friendly design which accommodates impromptu uses, as well as encourages education as the relics are highlighted with historical markers. The expected outcome is to instill in our melting pot community a greater sense of appreciation regarding our City's foundation and how we grew from there to be Shelby County's largest city. It is our honor to protect the rich history handed down to us while preserving them for future generations to enjoy. Today, this space houses municipal buildings and holds diverse community events, such as Fall Fest, Jazz in the Park, and the Farmers Market. The project's impact on the local community should be significant. It will give the opportunity to motivate residents to get outside and enjoy its "walking history" along an aesthetically pleasing shoot off the Buck Creek Trail. Although the indelible mark left by visually improving our landmarks cannot be quantified, it can be measured by the pride reflected in our residents and appreciation in protecting our local history.

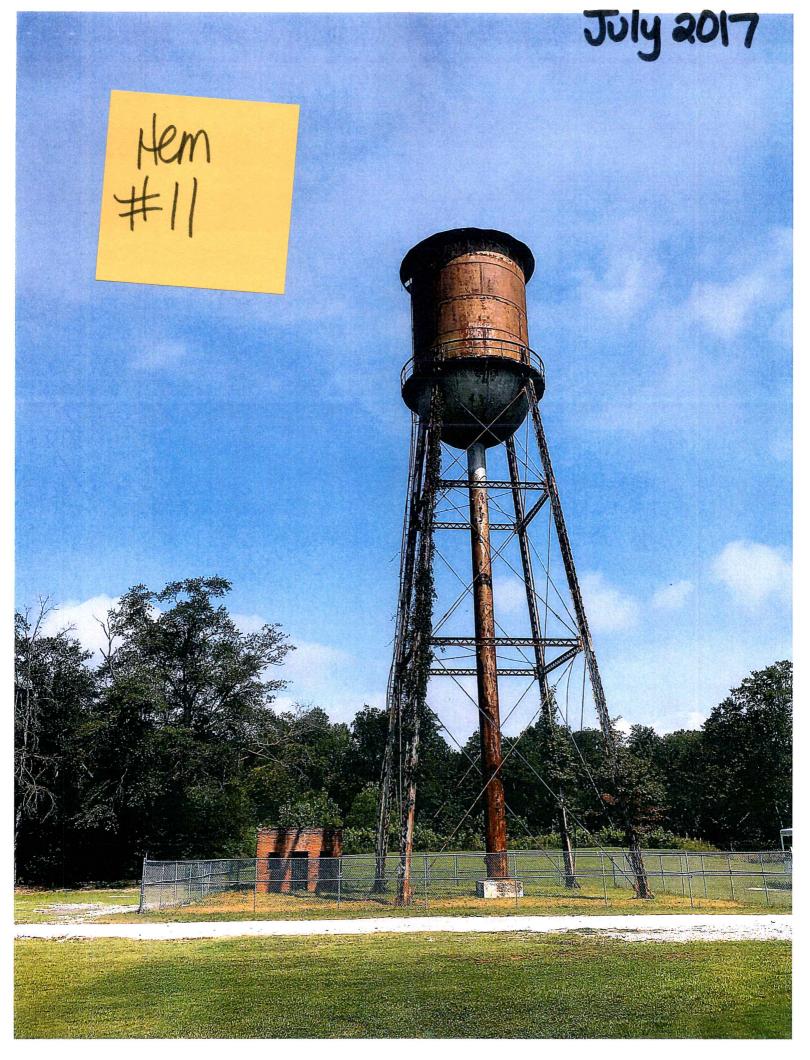


\* Floor Plan Sr Jail. #5
\*\* Picture taken early 2000's.



\* Picture taken early 2000's







# ALABAMA REGISTER OF LANDMARKS & HERITAGE NOMINATION FORM

I. NAME OF			ill's _"Wad	erTower"	
Historic Name:		10 10 1 H	1113 - 000	101001	
and/or Common N	Name: MW	aser city th			
Preferred name for Ce	ertificate: Histor	ric Name or Common Na	ıme	*	
2. LOCATIO	N 10==	Marin Sala I I	. 1 4 . 1		
Street & Number:	1953	Municipal V	vay		
City: Alabas	Her		0		
State: Alabama	Cour	ty: Shelby	Zip:	35007	
Is the property loc	ated within the	city limits? XYes No		• MG	
Latitude: 33.6			le: <u>86.8163</u>	3773	
Township: 215	Range: 03W	Section: 2 USGS C	Quad Map:		
, ,					
3. CLASSIFIC	CATION				
Category:	Building(s)	District Structu	ıre Site Object		
Ownership:	Public	Private Both			
Status:	Occupied	Unoccupied Work i	in progress		
Accessible:	No	Yes: restricted Yes: un	restricted		
		behind fence	•		
4. OWNER C	E DDODED	TV			
11.1.	OF TUAN	ader			
Name:	MUNICI	OAL WAY		1	
Address: 1953	der	State: A		7in: 20117	
City: Halva	5-664-6	State. 71		Zip: <u>35007</u>	
Telephone: 20 Email: #il	lingime (	uty of alabaste	r (am		
EIIIaii	THE C	A I OI TO INCOME TO	7.0011		

#### 5. FLOOR PLAN & SITE PLAN

Attach sketched floor plan. If the property includes more than one building, submit a site plan showing the locations, dates of construction, and uses of the buildings.

6. PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION See Instructions for more information Source: Construction date: 1906,191 Source: Alteration date: Architect/Builder: Contractor: 10 Remaining historic fabric: Physical condition: Excellent (High, Medium, Low) (Excellent, Good, Fair, Poor, Ruinous) No. of stories: Historic use of property: Current use of property: other Architectural style sub-category: Architectural style category: Basic shape: Basic typology: See Historic Construction material(s): Basic floor plan: Roof finish material(s): Current exterior wall material(s): concrete Foundation material: Main roof configuration: Porch type: Window type and materials: Describe alterations: Number and type of all outbuildings on the property: Buck Creek Cotton mill "Tail" (if significant, fill out separate survey form) Exterior Architectural Description: 100+year old wastertower. Buck Creek Mill's water tower stands erect d the parking lot of the municipal government ings, next to the buck Creek Cotton Mill Jail. I are enclosed by a chain link tence.

#### 7. SIGNIFICANCE

Criteria (check all that apply and explain below). See Instructions for more information.

Criterion A: Associated wit community, state, or nation.	h historical events and act	ivities relating to the property	that are important to the history of the
Criterion B: Person or group nation.	p with whom the property	vis associated is important to t	he history of the community, state, or
Criterion C: Type, period, or of the community, state, or nation		represents architectural featur	es that are significant in the development
Criterion D: Property has yie (archaeological component).			š
AREAS OF SIGNIFICAN			
archeology-prehistoric	community planning		religion
archeology-historic	conservation	landscape architecture	scientific
agriculture	education	law	sculpture
architecture	engineering	literature	social history
art	exploration/settleme	entmilitary	theater
Commerce	funerary art	music	other:
communications	humanitarian	politics/government	6

#### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

For each area of significance checked above, explain why this property is important. Use additional sheets as necessary.

& Attached sheet.

Use attached sheets as necessary PODBY JOE Scales - Silvina Cotton Mill Company 1905 Appraisal Survey of Silvina Cotton Mill At changed name to Buck Oreck Cotton Mill 1926 - Depraisal Survey of Buck Oreck Cotton Mill 1926 - Depraisal Survey of Buck Oreck Cotton Mill 1926 - Depraisal Survey of Buck Oreck Cotton Mill 1926 - Depraisal Survey of Buck Oreck Cotton Mill
9. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA Acreage of nominated property: 5000 Square flet of enclosed area  Attach a map showing the location of the property.
10. Person Applying for Historic Register Designation  Name: Register Designation
Address: 953 MUNCIPAL WAY  City: 42 MARY State: AL Zip: 3507  Telephone: 505-664-683  Email: Killingin exity of alabaser .com

#### **II. PHOTOGRAPHS:**

Images are essential to the review process. Submit current, good quality digital images on a CD/DVD. Interior and exterior photos are required. Good quality 4" x 6" photos will be accepted, but do NOT staple or tape photographs. All images will become the property of the AHC and will not be returned.

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#### **Statement of Significance**

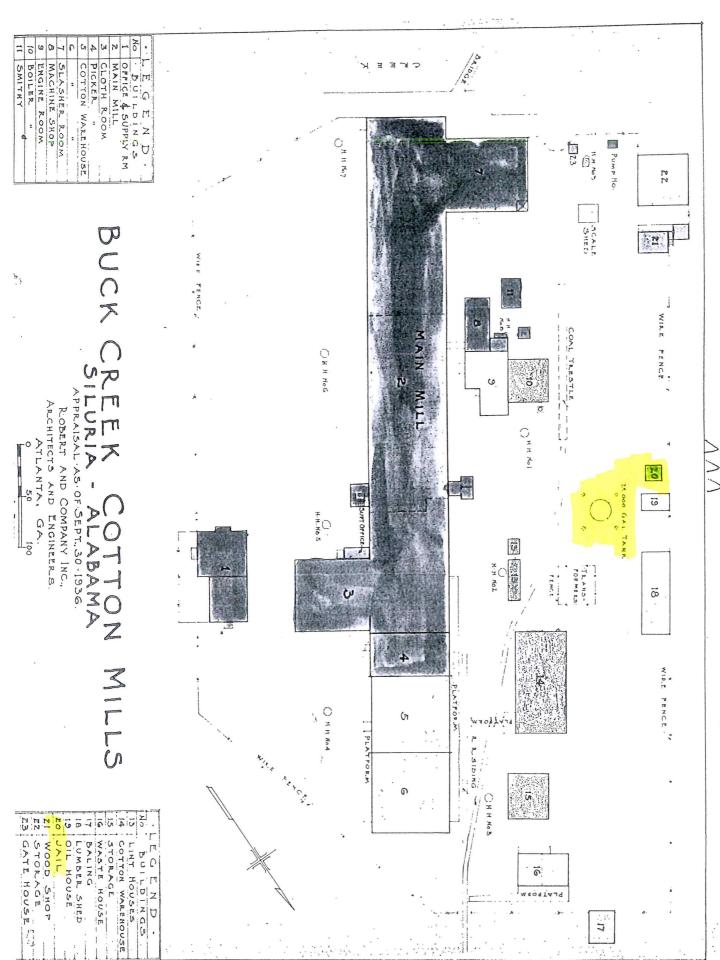
The State of Alabama's history is proudly rooted in industrial development. The water tower and jail are the last two remaining remnants from a bygone era marking the rich history of the Siluria Mill Village, the self-contained community which laid the groundwork for the Alabaster we know and love today. The City of Alabaster considers both to be a symbolic reminder of where we've come from as a city. Currently, they lack the look of honor and distinction they deserve. We would like to change that. Marking our historical relics go hand and hand with the AL200 Bi-Centennial Celebration. The overall intention of our bi-centennial project is to enhance the unique characteristics standing at the heart of our community while offering a pedestrian friendly design which accommodates impromptu uses, as well as encourages education as the relics are highlighted with historical markers. The expected outcome is to instill in our melting pot community a greater sense of appreciation regarding our City's foundation and how we grew from there to be Shelby County's largest city. It is our honor to protect the rich history handed down to us while preserving them for future generations to enjoy. Today, this space houses municipal buildings and holds diverse community events, such as Fall Fest, Jazz in the Park, and the Farmers Market. The project's impact on the local community should be significant. It will give the opportunity to motivate residents to get outside and enjoy its "walking history" along an aesthetically pleasing shoot off the Buck Creek Trail. Although the indelible mark left by visually improving our landmarks cannot be quantified, it can be measured by the pride reflected in our residents and appreciation in protecting our local history.

Surveyed by G.J. Robinson Drawn by R.W. Jones

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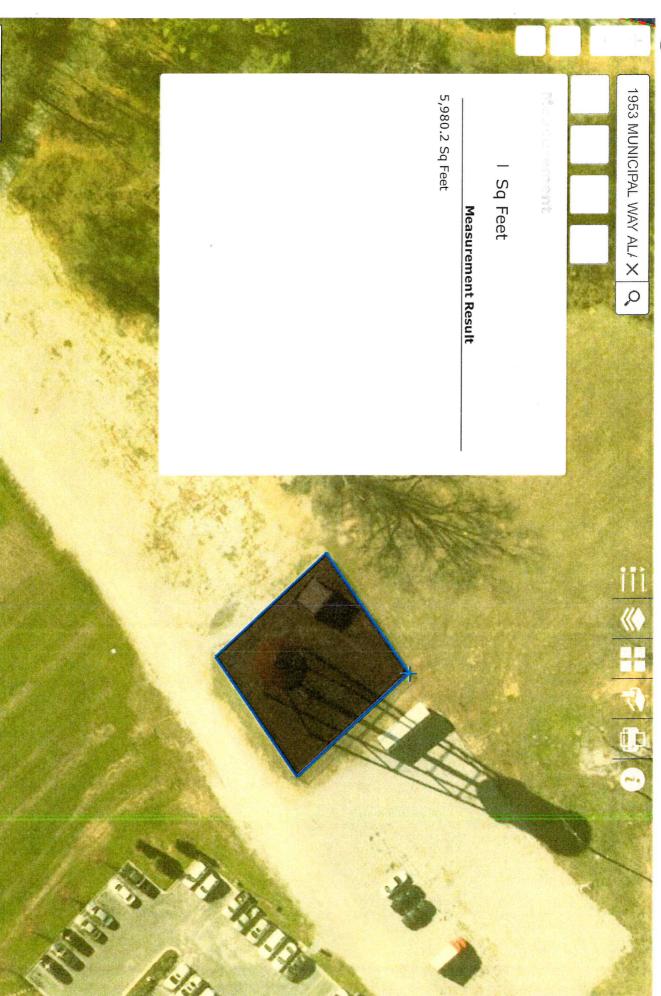
\*Dated Mar. 18, 1905

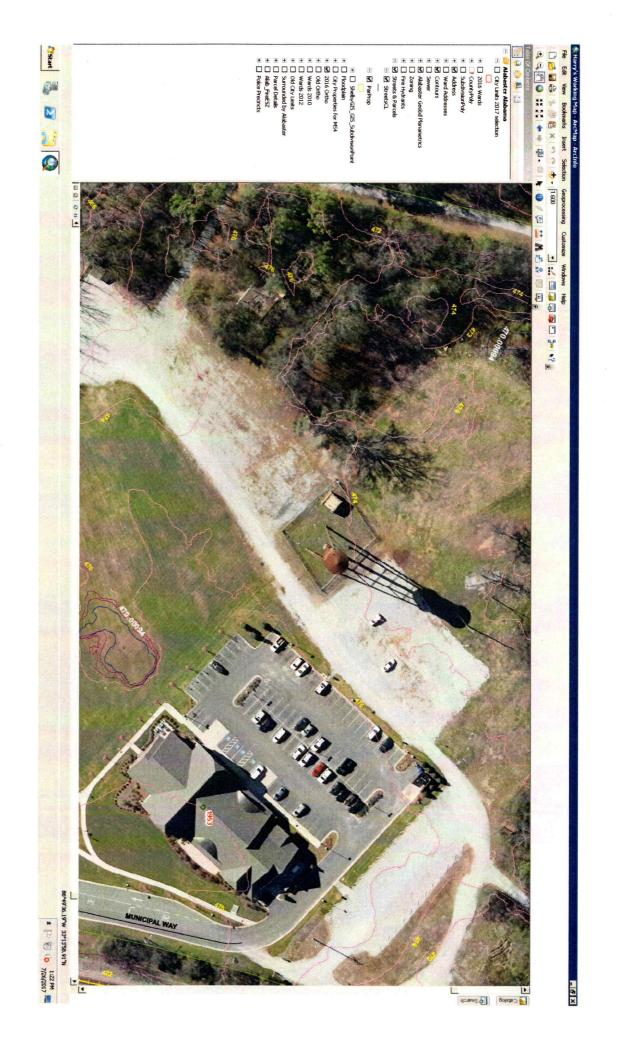
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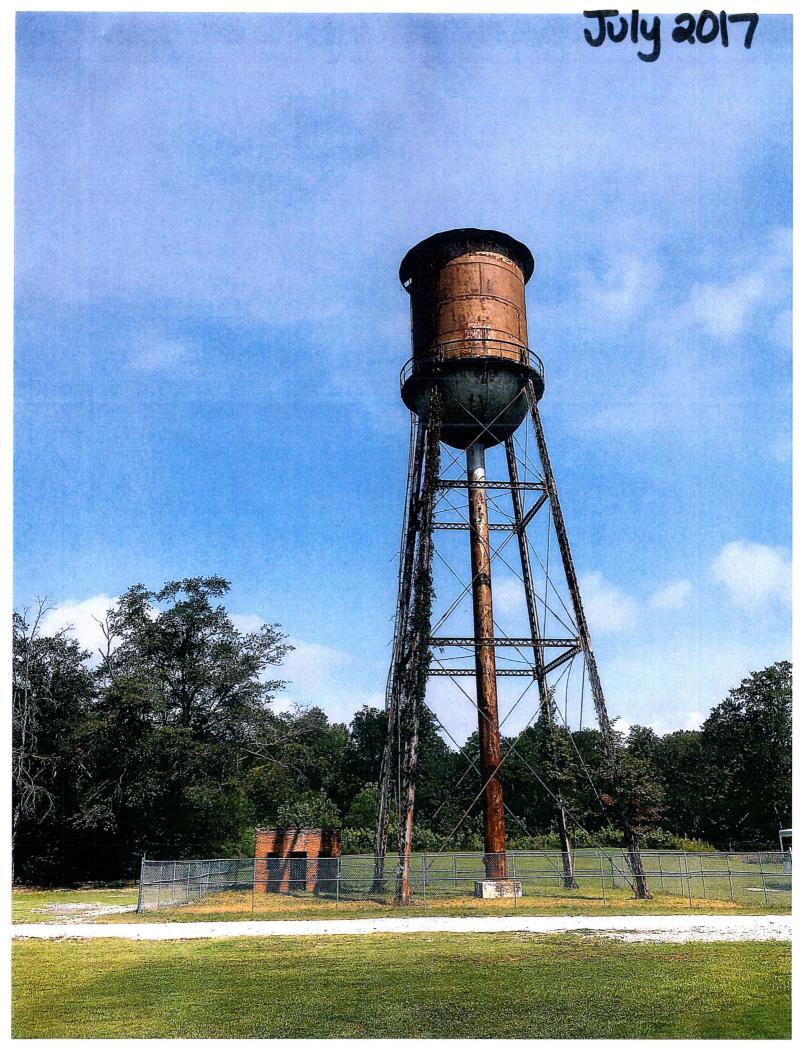


The only original structures Still standing on the property.







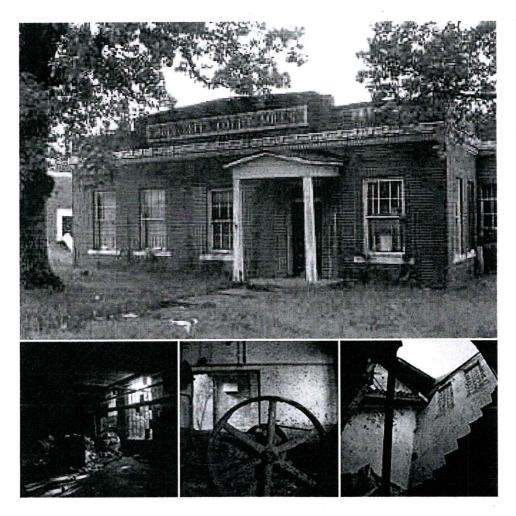




Workers at Siluria's Buck Creek Cotton Mill pose for group portrait circa 1917-1921. (Contributed)

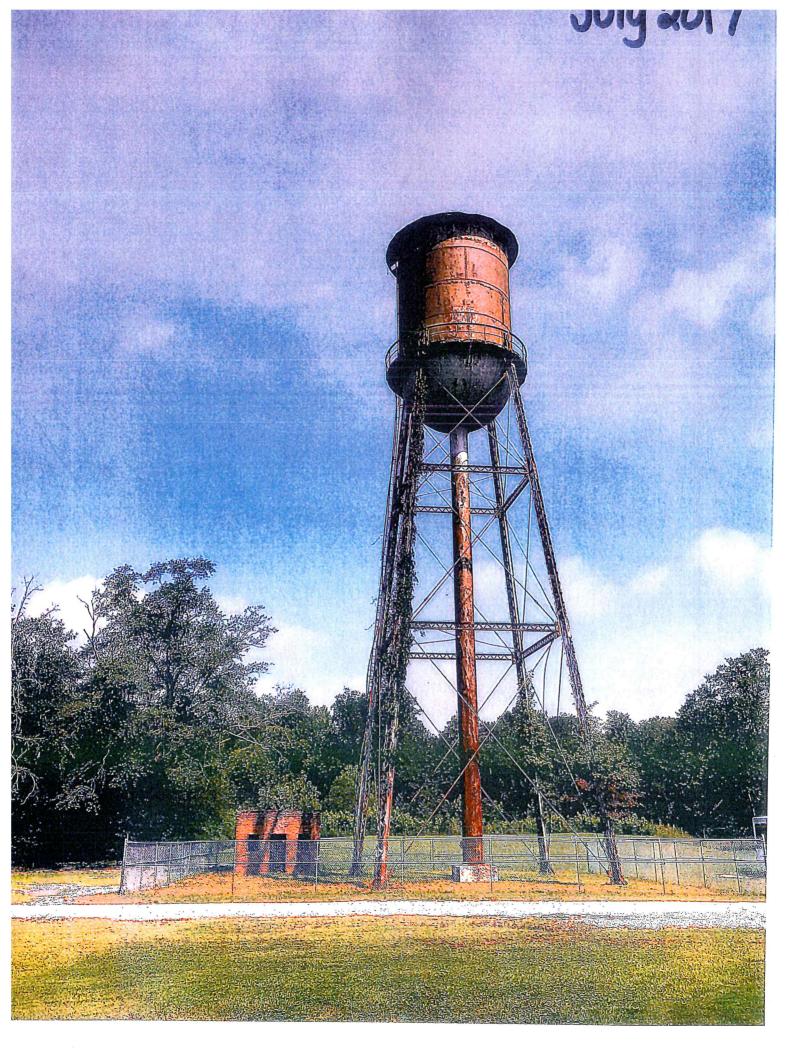




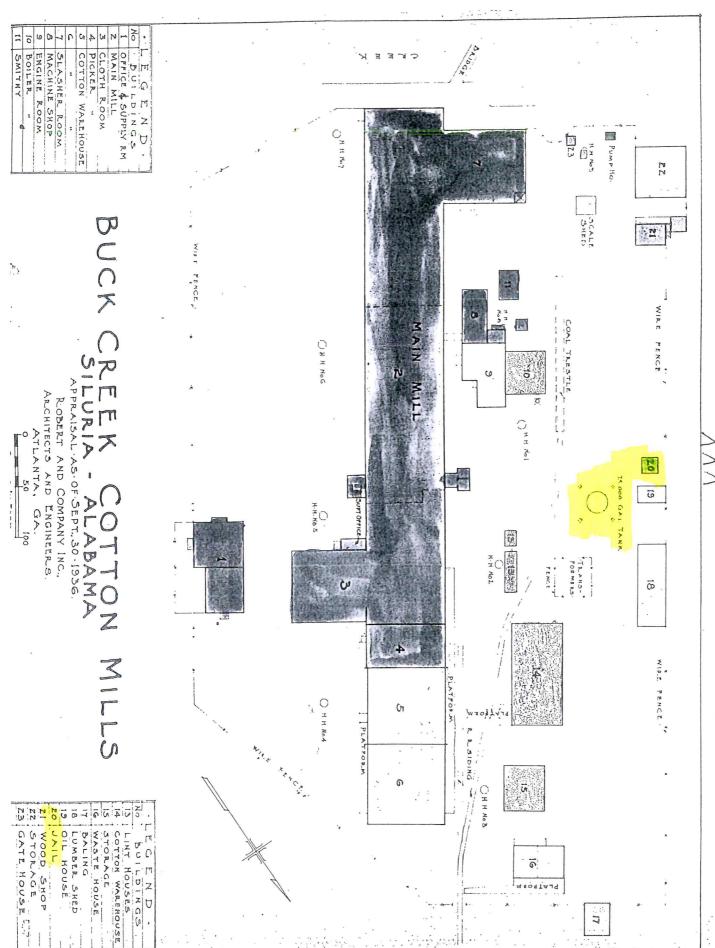






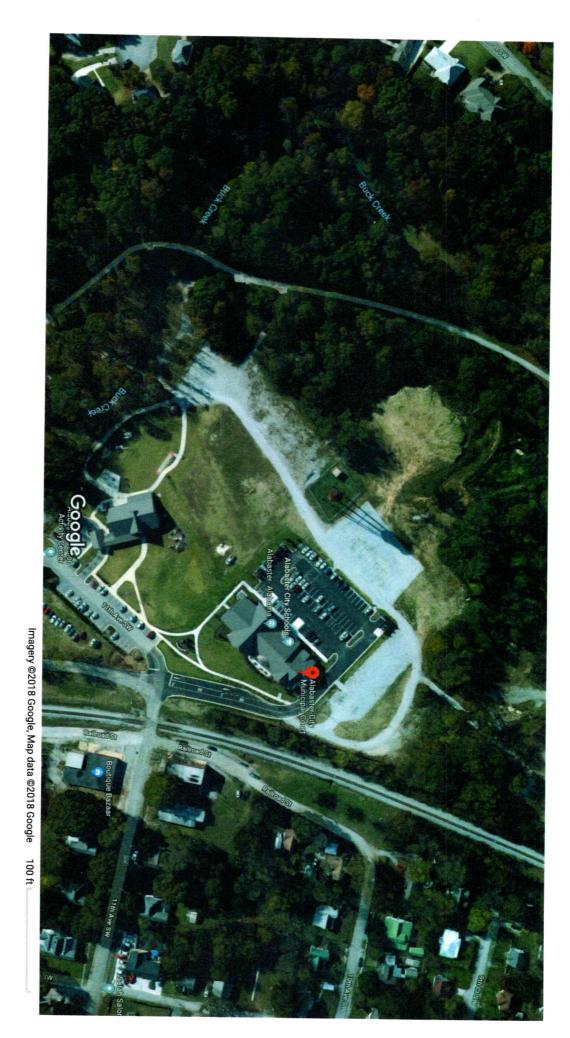






The open original structures still standing on the property.

# Google Maps Alabaster City Municipal Court



natural springs that provided water for the mill and village, and a two-story Community House that included a movie theater on the upper level. The Community House was destroyed by fire in 1933 and was replaced by a one-story brick Recreation Building. The Band Hall that was located next to the Community House was converted to a Movie Theater with a 316-seating capacity and was operated by Albert Grady Guy. The women were taught sewing and cooking and the men had sports. Ballroom dancing classes were offered to those interested. Extremely and unusually extensive were the social activities under the leadership of Mrs. T.C. Thompson that there was maintained a *Brass Band* of well over twenty-five instruments, a Band Hall constructed in 1924, with a full-time band conductor and members in uniform, giving open air concerts rendered on a Sunday afternoon.

Buck Creek Cotton Mills made a name for themselves not only in textile industry, but also sported the best Semi-Pro Baseball Team of the 1930's to the 1960's. The Buck Creek "Millers" took the team to the next level when owner, J.T. Phillips, hired a player manager, Henry "Moose" Parrish, whose main responsibility was to scout/recruit/hire baseball players by offering a "job" at the mill with the understanding that their primary duty was to practice and play baseball for the Buck Creek Mill. From the 1930's into the 1960's the team set unbelievable winning records. Several players went on to play for the Major League: Clay Bryant, Wilson (Dee) Miles, Luman Harris, Bobby Bragan, Handley (Jake) Daniel, Jimmy Bragan (coach), Rev. Guy Morton, Jr., and Jim (Peanut) Davenport. The most famous of the players was Jim Davenport. In 1958, Jim was the San Francisco Giants third baseman, named a National League All-Star, and enjoyed playing with the Giants in the World Series.

T.C. Thompson firmly believed in the value of education. Reported on October 22, 1912 at a stockholder's meeting, "We have kept the mill and village in good repair and have tried to improve our organization, which we believe we have done. Our village is in good shape at the present time, clean and healthful, and a good school with two teachers and from 50 to 60 scholars, all of which is necessary to improve efficiency of our help." By the spring and summer of 1921, a four classroom "high school" building and auditorium was constructed next to the existing five classroom elementary and junior high school building, thus becoming the second consolidated school in Shelby County Alabama at the start of the new school year. Mr. Thompson did not only believe in education, but generously invested his own personal funds and donated property to expand the educational services to his village. Appropriately, the school was named after him and the beginning of Thompson High School.

Even though it was a simple and safer time, law and order was established for the mill village. Mrs. T. C. Thompson provided for the safety and security of the village by maintaining a small jail located behind the main mill building. William Francis "Frank" Fallon was responsible for the daily operation of the jail. Mr. J.T. Phillips who owned the mill and village after the Thompsons', later filled the position with Chuck Harris. To answer the questions: what years

was the jail used and was it only for people living and working in the mill village, I can only make assumptions due to the lack of records. I know the jail was not surveyed in 1916, and Mrs. Thompson was connected to the plant through 1931, so the jail was constructed during that time frame. It was used for the people in the Siluria area which consisted of people working at the mill.

Today, though the mill no longer exists with only reminders as the old water tower and jail stand guard over the Alabaster Civic Complex, mill memories still live on and is not forgotten. Each year, the close-knit community of who's lives who were shaped by "the village" meet to swap stories, photos, and memories at the annual Buck Creek Mills Reunion put on by former employees, family and friends. Rene' Day speaking of her grandmother's (Nannie May Lightsey) recollection, recalls, "her time there was among the happiest of her life." The reunion takes place on the second Saturday in September.

The town, Alabaster, located adjacent to Siluria, was created in the early 1920's as the site for employee housing for the Alabaster Lime Company. The combination of undeveloped land, employment opportunities, and the location along Highway 31, the main road at the time between Birmingham and Montgomery, led to the rapid growth during the pioneering industrial days. While the landlocked town of Siluria peaked at the height of the cotton mill days, Alabaster kept flourishing. The two communities saw the advantage of combining and in 1971, Siluria voted to merge with Alabaster. Today, Alabaster is a sprawling suburban city from 427 residents in 1953 to 33,000 in 2017 making Alabaster the largest city in Shelby County. While it's growth has skyrocketed, it's commitment to the quality of life offered to its residents remain the same as its founding father, T.C. Thompson.

The establishment of the Siluria Cotton Mill on Buck Creek marked the beginning of the Siluria "mill village". Textile production began operation in 1896 with expansion being a constant factor to keep up with the growth of the company and community. The main section of the mill was built in 1903-1904, with the main office section in 1906, and the first addition to the main section of the mill building in 1911. As far as research goes, the water tower was installed in the very beginning with no alterations to the 75,000-gallon tank. In 1916, the surveyor noted the mill was fueled by coal, heat: steam, power: electricity, raw stock: cotton, product: sheetings and yarns, and supplies: 1,000-gallons per minute, taking water from well supplied by creek. The water tower survived the tornado of 1953 where the damage to the plant was so extensive that operation had to be suspended for a full year while repairs were made. At that time, more modern equipment was installed in some departments to make the mill more competitive.

It was the custom in those days for large manufacturers to develop a surrounding community for its workforce to attract and keep workers. Buck Creek Mills was no exception. Mr. Thompson endeavored to make his mill a "model" for mill villages. While conditions were harsh in the textile industry, it was the sense of community that sustained life in our mill village. It was the expressed desire of Mr. and Mrs. T.C. Thompson, and later Mr. J.T. Phillips, to provide for the whole life of its employees and those that lived in the village. In the course of decades, the approximately 305 acres of the Mill Village occupied the mill, stores, grocery store, hotel, ballpark, community center clubhouse, medical dispensary, doctor and dentist offices, churches, Band Hall, movie theater, and a school. By 1936, the village consisted of 120 operative cottages including homes of the mill executives. The company owned the houses while the employees rented them. The houses were of varying ages, having been built from 1904 to 1935. All houses had electric lights and water with a few having complete bathrooms while others had outhouses. Village streets at that time were not paved.

The sound of the whistle was the heartbeat of this small cotton mill village. It was powered by steam and its mournful sound could be heard for miles in all directions. The whistle at Siluria Mills would blow loud each morning Monday through Friday at 4:30 a.m. to wake up the employees on the first shift. It would sound a call to work at 5:45 a.m. and then blow at 6:00 a.m. sharp to start work. The whistle blew at 1:45 p.m. for the second shift's call to work and promptly at 2:00 p.m. to start the shift. The third shift was summoned at 9:45 p.m. and the 10:00 p.m. blast indicated that work should begin. That rhythmic cycle started all over the next morning. Weather permitting, most people would walk to work who lived in the mill village. The Mill was a place where the entire family could find work. The lack of child labor laws meant even the children could work to add to the family income.

Mr. and Mrs. Thompson provided for their social life as well. There was both Girl Scout and Boy Scout Organizations and buildings for their use, a Community Park near Blue Spring, one of two

Search billions of records on Ancestry.com

First Name

Last Name

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Cotton Mill - Song written and performed by Don L Williams, former resident of Shelby County. www.donsongs.net

# Siluria Cotton Mill Company

By Bobby Joe Seales



"Beginning of Operation Dates Back to Year 1896"

Thomas Carlyle Thompson, third child born of Jesse Sampson Thompson, 1825-1872, and Henrietta Collins, 1826-1903, was born in Oak Bowery, Chambers County Alabama on June 22, 1850. However, all early census records indicate that he was born in 1851. He died in Siluria, Shelby County Alabama on October 5, 1922 and is buried in Oak Hill Cemetery in Birmingham, Jefferson County Alabama. He was a pioneer "master builder" in the southern textile industry.

Jesse S. Thompson and his family, one of the city's pioneer families, came to Birmingham, Jefferson County Alabama in 1871. He died July 5, 1872 and was the first interment in Oak Hill Cemetery in Birmingham, Alabama. His oldest child, Miss Cornelia A. Thompson, 1848-1935, was prior to the time of her death on February 11, 1935 "the only surviving charter member of the First Methodist Church" in Birmingham, Alabama. His oldest son, Burges Asbury Thompson, 1850-1922, was a former "pioneer mayor" of Birmingham, Alabama serving from 1888-1890. Another son, William H. Thompson, 1866-1913, played an important role in the first incorporation of Siluria Cotton Mill Company.

T.C. Thompson married Miss Julia N. Seaman in Jefferson County Alabama on October 11, 1883. They moved to Shelby County Alabama and in the early 1900's built a beautiful two-story home that resembled a small mansion on the West Side of Alabaster, known as <a href="Blue Spring Farm">Blue Spring Farm</a>. Julia Nancy (Seaman) Thompson, 1866-1940, death record indicate that she died in Shelby County Alabama on October 24, 1940. A day remembered by many, "Mrs. Thompson was cremated and her ashes were dropped from a low-flying airplane over the orchard on the farm, which was famous for its peaches." However, Oak Hill Cemetery records indicate Mrs. Julia N. Thompson's date of interment was December 18, 1940, and her "cremated remains were placed in a brick vault grave." She was the daughter of George Edward Seaman and Sarah Frances Hudgins.

In 1896 Mr. Thomas C. Thompson organized and built on the banks of Buck Creek in Siluria, Shelby County Alabama a textile manufacturing plant and named it Selma Cotton Mill. This location was once the old muster ground where the "Shelby County Volunteers" for the Indian War was organized in 1836. Soon thereafter, a village to house employees was built and the manufacture of cotton fabric was begun. At that time it was said, "They have every prospect of making the enterprise one of very great success, and its establishment marks a new era in the plan possibilities and fast-coming development of the county."

Siluria Cotton Mill Company was originally incorporated under the laws of the State of Delaware on November 17, 1902. The main section of the mill was built in 1903-1904, the office was built in 1906, and the first addition to the main section of the mill building was in 1911. It was re-incorporated in the State of Alabama under the same name on February 6, 1908. On April 6, 1911 the name was changed to Buck Creek Cotton Mills, at which time certain changes were made in the issues of outstanding capital stock with an increase from \$250,000 to \$600,000. As reported on October 22, 1912 at the stockholder's meeting, "We have kept the mill and village in good repair and have tried to improve our organization, which we believe we have done. Our village is in good shape at the present time, clean and healthful and we also have a good church and have this winter a good school with two teachers and from 50 to 60 scholars, all of which is necessary to improve the efficiency of our help."

In the spring and summer of 1921 a four-class room "high school" building and auditorium was constructed next to the existing five-class room elementary and junior high school building in Siluria, Shelby County Alabama. In the fall of that same year school started, thus, becoming the second consolidated school in Shelby County Alabama. Owing to the generous donation of property and personal funds from Thomas Carlyle Thompson, the school was named Thompson, which was the beginning of Thompson High School.

It was the desire of Mr. and Mrs. T.C. Thompson, and later Mr. J.T. Phillips, to provide for the whole life of its employees and those that lived in the village. Located in Siluria on approximately 305 acres were the mill, stores, hotel, village, ballpark and clubhouse. In addition, there were doctor and dentist offices, churches, and a school. The village in 1936 consisted of 120 operative cottages including homes of the mill executives. The houses were of varying ages, having been built from 1904 to 1935. All houses had electric lights and water and a few had complete bathrooms while others had outhouses. Village streets at that time were not paved. Provided for their social life were (1) both Girl Scout and Boy Scout Organizations and buildings for their use, (2) a Community Park near Blue Spring, one of two natural springs that provided water for the mill and village, and (3) a two-story Community House that included a movie theater on the upper level. The Community House was destroyed by fire in 1933 and was replaced by a one-story brick Recreation Building. The Band Hall that was located next to the Community House was converted to a Movie Theater with a 316 seating capacity and was operated by Albert Grady Guy, 1905-1979. The women were taught sewing and cooking and the men had sports. There were even classes taught in ballroom dancing. So extensive were the social activities under the leadership of Mrs. T.C. Thompson that there was maintained a *Brass Band* of well over twenty-five instruments, a Band Hall constructed in 1924, with a full-time band conductor and members in uniform. The Shelby County Reporter, dated Thursday, March 20, 1930, indicate "The Buck Creek Band, directed by W.H. Hicks, rendered an open air concert Sunday afternoon." Buck Creek Cotton Mills, under the leadership of J.T. Phillips, was known for its Semi-Pro Baseball Team. Some of the larger families that lived in the village were Brogden, Byrd, Davenport, Langston, and McCartney.

If you have any information or can identify the newspaper and date the following article appeared, please contact **Bobby Joe Seales**. The caption that was below the newspaper photo of Buck Creek Baseball Team,

"Pictured above is the strong Buck Creek team of Siluria which has scored 67 victories to 6 defeats in play during the current season. Led by Dee Miles, Johnny Thomas and Herman Ware, a former Beaumont hurler, this squad has perhaps the best rounded pitching corps in amateur baseball. Both of the former slabsmen have rung up 19 wins to a duo of losses. Buck Creek is to meet Jacksonville Monday in one of two Labor Day contests in the state amateur championship tournament. Standing: Sonny Birchfield, utility; Chuck Harris, second base; Hilton Tubbs, shortstop; Fern Ward, left field; Jack Husley, utility. Kneeling: Nigger Yates, catcher; Russell Lowery, first base; Tobe Moore, third base; Red Amos, pitcher; Toots Brandon, catcher; Moose Parrish, manager. Sitting: Dee Miles, pitcher; Johnny Thomas, pitcher, Herman Ware, pitcher; Buddy Moore, mascot." (Henry Clay "Moose" Parrish was born January 28, 1902 and died March 3, 1975 in Clarke County Georgia. The 1930 Randolph County North Carolina census indicates his occupation was "Fielder, Ball Player" and he was living in the next household to Hilton L. "Toots" Brandon, "Pitcher, Ball Player". Toots died in 1973 in Caddo County Oklahoma. Charles Hulet "Chuck" Harris was born February 27, 1907, died April 9, 1986, and is buried in Elliottsville Cemetery in Shelby County Alabama. For many years he served as Chief of Police in Siluria.))

The medical needs in the village for many years were provided by Dr. John Allen Hines, Sr., 1896-1959, and his faithful nurse, Miss Mollie Belle Vinzant, 1900-1987. In July 1951 Dr. Willie Elijah "Bill" Stinson, 1907-1971, arrived in Siluria and his faithful nurse for many years was Miss Evelyn Urmi, 1900-1997.

Mrs. T.C. Thompson provided for the safety and security of the village by maintaining a small *jail* located behind the main mill building. William Francis "Frank" Fallon, 1872-1962, was responsible for the daily operation of the jail. Mr. J.T. Phillips later filled this position with Charles Hulet "Chuck" Harris, 1907-1986.

After the death of Mr. T.C. Thompson on October 5, 1922 his family operated Buck Creek Cotton Mills. Mrs. T.C. Thompson served as President from October 12, 1922 until her resignation on October 5, 1931. On June 25, 1935 <a href="James Thomas Phillips">James Thomas Phillips</a> was elected as a member of the Board of Directors to fill the vacancy "caused by the resignation of Frank Dominick." Mr. J.T. Phillips on February 8, 1937 was elected President and Treasurer of Buck Creek Cotton Mills and within that year had acquired the corporation, the operating facility, and all factory and village property.

On April 18, 1953 a <u>tornado</u> damaged the plant to the extent that operation had to be suspended for a full year while repairs were made. At this time, more modern equipment was installed in some departments to make the mill more competitive.

Siluria was incorporated on May 25, 1954 with a population of approximately 600. The first city leaders were (1) Mayor: Tollie Eugene Jones, 1906-1985. (2) Council: Burrell Brannon, Willie H. Brogden, 1904-1976, Dr. Willie Elijah "Bill" Stinson, 1907-1971, Bascom L. Vinzant, 1906-1987, and Cecil Brown Zuiderhoek, 1899-1987. (3) Town Clerk: Frances (Nabors) Duke Wilson, 1919-1996. (4) Chief of Police: Charles Hulet "Chuck" Harris, 1907-1986. The people of Siluria on April 27, 1971 voted to merge with Alabaster, the adjoining city.

Siluria was the birth place for Ann M. Steely, born July 6, 1923, and is where she lived her first seven years and attended the first grade at Thompson. After her father's death in 1935 in Dallas County Alabama she later moved with her mother and brother to Oklahoma and then in 1944 "packed her bags to try her luck in Hollywood." Ann Steely changed her "acting name" to Cathy O'Donnell and made her screen debute in the Best Picture of 1946 in The Best Years of Our Lives. Her final film before retiring from the screen was another classic Hollywood's greatest, the Best Picture of 1959 and winner of eleven total Oscars, was Ben-Hur, Her parents were Harold Grady "Henry" Steely and Ora Lecher Steely. The April 3, 1930 Siluria Village, Shelby County, Alabama census indicates Harold G. Steely, age 37 years, born in Alabama, his parents born in Alabama, married at the age of 29 years, "School Teacher" and his wife, Ora L., age 24 years, born in Alabama, her parents born in Alabama, married at the age of 17 years, and their two children, all born in Alabama, (1) Ann M., daughter, age 6 years, and (2) Joe C., son, age 4 years 7 months. Living with them as "boarders" were two 21 year old single school teachers, Mary S. Burkette and Eva Johnson. In a May 2005 interview with Fred F. Phillips, who moved to Siluria in 1927, the Steely's "Mill Village House" was located next to the Community House. Some of their neighbors were Arnold C. Edwards, Homer Stanley, Alice Cofer, Berry Cofer, Riley Cofer, Samuel W. Huddleston, Lester Williams and James C. Goff. Mr. Steely was not only a school teacher at Thompson but also was the local theatre operator, located in the Community

House, in Siluria. Ann married Robert Wyler, brother of director William Wyler. Ann S. Wyler died April 11, 1970 in West Hollywood, Los Angeles County, California. Her husband, Robert Wyler, died January 16, 1971. They had no children. For more information about "Cathy O'Donnell" click here.

In December 1959 J.W. Valentine Co., Inc. from New York purchased the operating facility, factory site, and all the village property. The name of the business was again changed and this time it became Siluria Mills, Inc.

The final name of the business was changed in January 1965 to Buck Creek Industries, Inc. and the village houses were sold to the employees. The operating facility and factory site was sold in 1968 to Reeves Brothers, Inc., a New York Stock Exchange, and in 1972 to Canton Textile Mills, Inc. from Canton, Georgia. Assets were liquidated in May 1979 and Buck Creek Industries, Inc. closed its doors permanently. *The Birmingham News*, page 58, dated Thursday, May 10, 1979, "A textile mill which was once the largest onsite employer in Shelby County is closing its doors this week ...."

The old *Buck Creek Mills Work Application Forms* which give information on many of the past employees are at The Shelby County Historical Society.

Peggy Nell (Peeples) Genry organized a committee and on September 24, 1988 the *first* annual "Buck Creek Cotton Mills Reunion" was held for all former employees and their families. It was annually held the second Saturday in September.

In 2003 the City of Alabaster purchased the 22 acre Buck Creek Cotton Mills site. In August 2007 the demolition of the buildings were started by Granger Grading of Alexander City, Alabama. At that time, the city's plans were to have all of the buildings taken down except for the old jail, the water tower and the office building. In January 2008 only these three structures remained standing. However, in early 2009 the office building was taken down due to structural damage caused when the attached portion of the mill was demolished.

On September 19, 2010 the City of Alabaster held the grand-opening of the "new" Senior Center, built by the Montevallo-based Wayne Davis Construction Company, that is located on a portion of the site where the Buck Creek Cotton Mills once stood.

If you have any further historical information or photographs concerning Buck Creek Cotton Mills or if you have further information or corrections on any of the people, dates, or events mentioned above please contact Bobby Joe Seales.

Visit Lord, How that Old Whistle Blew! written by Rusty Kendrick.

For description place cursor over each photograph



- My Connections to Shelby County ~ By Bobby Joe Seales
   The Beginning of Alabaster

- History of Shelby County
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468 South Perry Street Montgomery, Alabama 36130-0900 334-242-3184 / Fax: 334-240-3477 Lisa D. Jones Executive Director State Historic Preservation Officer

April 4, 2018

City of Alabaster Karen Fillingim 1953 Municipal Way Alabaster, AL 35007

RE: Buck Creek Water Tower & Jail, 1953 Municipal Way, Shelby County, Alabama

Listed Date: March 29, 2018

Dear Ms. Fillingim:

The Alabama Historical Commission is pleased to inform you that The Buck Creek Water Tower & Jail has been favorably reviewed and is now listed in the Alabama Register of Landmarks and Heritage under Criteria A and C. A certificate indicating that the property has been added to the register will be mailed out shortly.

The Alabama Register is a prestigious listing of historic, architectural, and archaeological landmarks. These selected Alabama landmarks are worthy of both recognition and preservation. Listing on the state register is an honorary designation imposing no benefits or restrictions on property owners.

The Alabama Historical Commission sponsors a historical marker and plaque program to recognize properties that contribute to the unique history of Alabama. Properties that have been listed in the Alabama Register of Landmarks and Heritage are eligible to purchase a historical marker through this office. Please contact me if you are interested in purchasing a marker or plaque for this historic property. For additional information on the Alabama Historic Cemetery Register and other programs offered by the Alabama Historical Commission, please contact me or visit our website at www.ahc.alabama.gov

The Alabama Historical Commission appreciates your efforts to preserve Alabama's historic resources. I wish you much success in all endeavors and look forward to working with you on future preservation projects.

Very truly yours,

Hannah Garmon

Harrah Lamon

Coordinator, Alabama Register of Landmarks and Heritage 334.230.2644 or Hannah.Garmon@ahc.alabama.gov

c: Shelby County Commission Shelby County Historical Society Mayor Marty Handlon Alabaster City Council



468 South Perry Street Montgomery, Alabama 36130-0900 334-242-3184 / Fax: 334-240-3477

Lisa D. Jones
Executive Director
State Historic Preservation Officer

April 4, 2018

Shelby County Commission P.O. Box 467 County Courthouse Building Columbiana, Alabama 35051

RE: Buck Creek Water Tower & Jail, 1953 Municipal Way, Shelby County, Alabama

Listed Date: March 29, 2018

Dear Commissioners:

The Alabama Historical Commission is pleased to inform you that the above referenced property has been favorably reviewed and is now listed on the Alabama Register of Landmarks and Heritage.

The Alabama Register is a prestigious listing of historic, architectural, and archaeological landmarks. These selected Alabama landmarks are worthy of both recognition and preservation. Listing on the state register is an honorary designation imposing no benefits or restrictions on property owners.

For additional information on the other programs offered by the Alabama Historical Commission, please contact me or visit our website at www.ahc.alabama.gov.

The Alabama Historical Commission appreciates your efforts to preserve Alabama's historic resources. I wish you much success in all endeavors and look forward to working with you on future preservation projects.

Very truly yours,

Harroh Hormon

Hannah Garmon

Coordinator, Alabama Register of Landmarks and Heritage

334.230.2644 or Hannah.Garmon@ahc.alabama.gov



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Lisa D. Jones
Executive Director
State Historic Preservation Officer

April 4, 2018

Shelby County Historical Society 1854 Old Courthouse P.O. Box 457 Columbiana, Alabama 35051

RE: Buck Creek Water Tower & Jail, 1953 Municipal Way, Shelby County, Alabama

Listed Date: March 29, 2018

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468 South Perry Street Montgomery, Alabama 36130-0900 334-242-3184 / Fax: 334-240-3477

Lisa D. Jones
Executive Director
State Historic Preservation Officer

April 4, 2018

Mayor Marty Handlon 1953 Municipal Way Alabaster, AL 35007

RE: Buck Creek Water Tower & Jail, 1953 Municipal Way, Shelby County, Alabama

Listed Date: March 29, 2018

Dear Mayor Handlon:

The Alabama Historical Commission is pleased to inform you that the above referenced property has been favorably reviewed and is now listed on the Alabama Register of Landmarks and Heritage.

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Lisa D. Jones Executive Director State Historic Preservation Officer

April 4, 2018

Alabaster City Council 1953 Municipal Way Alabaster, AL 35007

RE: Buck Creek Water Tower & Jail, 1953 Municipal Way, Shelby County, Alabama

Listed Date: March 29, 2018

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